The Magazine for Bisexuals No.10 50p

BI-MONTHLY

Tom Robinson

EXCLUSIVE ~ full, updated
text of GLAD TO BE GAY
bi ~ group news,
book reviews:
Colin MacInnes;
Martina Navratilova;
Alice Walker;
and
Lord Byron.

Pride '85

Bisexuals at the Lesbian and Gay Pride Carnival

On Saturday 29th June over 10,000 lesbian, gay and bisexual people and their friends marched through the streets of London on the biggest parade of its kind ever to be held in this country.

Some thirty people joined the bisexual contingent. Our two banners read: 'Bisexual and Proud to be lesbian and gay' and 'The Radical Lesbian/Gay Identified Bisexual Network'. It was disappointing that not more bisexual people joined the banners. But no doubt many hundreds of bisexual people were marching with lesbian and gay groups, as individuals, or were watching sympathetically from the side-lines. The Brighton Bisexual Action Network (B.A.N.), the Edinburgh Bisexual Group, the London Bisexual Group and the Radical Network were all represented.

The March was totally ignored by the mainstream press, television and radio. One notable exception was THE MORNING STAR which featured the festivities on its front page. London's listings magazines CITY LIMITS and TIME OUT had excellent coverage of Lesbian and Gay Pride events throughout the month of June. On July 10th Radio Four's news programme featured a letter from Eric Presland, one of the organisers, complaining about the lack of coverage by the media.

Another five thousand people joined the carnival at Jubilee Gardens on the South Bank of the Thames where we were treated to music and cabaret from Tom Robinson, Jimi Somerville, The Beverley Sisters, Mark Bunyan, Fay Presto, The Pink Singers, Consenting Adults and Pinque Rince.

'We are all bisexual,' says Ken Livingstone

Ken Livingstone, Leader of the G.L.C., welcomed the marchers to Jubilee Gardens, repeating his previously headlined statement: 'We are all bisexual!'

This didn't seem to go down too well with the crowd. One member of L.B.G. found himself to be the only person in his near vicinity cheering this remark.

A contingent of miners and their wives and families from the Dulais Valley in South Wales also joined the march with a brass band. This was to show solidarity after the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners group raised £30,000 during the strike. Sian James, the wife of a miner, told the crowd that this had been the best and friendliest demonstration she had been on.

It is interesting to see that such paragons of respectability, traditional womanhood and mainstream entertainment as The Beverley Sisters are now prepared to openly espouse the lesbian and gay cause.

At Jubilee Gardens the London Bisexual Group had a stall which did a roaring trade in magazines and badges, as well as distributing free hand-outs and information about future meetings and other activities. During the march we handed out 1,000 leaflets to marchers and by-standers. It was gratifying to note how many of the watching crowd actually read the leaflet, folded it carefully and stowed it in a pocket. For future reference? In fact one woman came to a meeting of L.B.G. saying she had been given a leaflet about the group while standing watching the march go by.

Lesbian Strength March

Bisexual women also joined the Lesbian Strength March on Saturday 22nd June. 1,000 women paraded from Hyde Park to the Lesbian and Gay Centre. The event was filmed to form part of a video for use in schools.

Fay Presto, glamoureuse magicienne

Fay Presto, magicienne extraordinaire, gave a mind-boggling performance in the cabaret tent. Erstwhile doyenne of the London Bisexual Group, she is now a resident artiste at London's Hippodrome (Proud to be Gay on Monday Evenings). Fay recently performed for royalty, providing the entertainment at the birthday party of the brother of someone called Princess Diana. You might have seen her photo in THE SUN once or twice.

Fay continues to hit the high spots. In August she will be performing at a party given by a certain football club chairman. He plays the piano too.

Mondays and Thursdays see Fay in the Hippodrome restaurant and Fridays at Stringfellows.

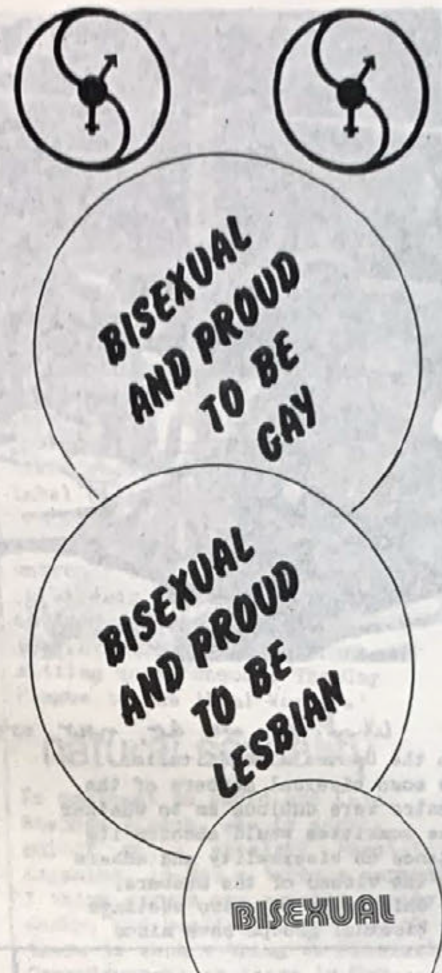
From September 15th she will take up a residence at 'Tea and Tipple' in Park's Wine Bar, 45 Inverness Terrace, Bayswater W2, from 5pm to 8pm.

On August 18th Fay will be a star guest at 'The Madhatter's Tea Party' in the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, Cowcross Street, EC1.

NEW BADGES

The London Bisexual Group has produced some new badges.
One bears the single word 'BISEXUAL' on a variety of backgrounds combining white, blue and pink: pink polka dots on blue; white, mottled with blue and pink; textured pink with hints of white; and pink/red ripples on white. The badges are an inch in diameter and no two are exactly the same. They cost 40 pence each.
Other badges cost 30 pence each. We have developed the theme of 'BI AND PROUD TO BE GAY' with two variations: 'BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE GAY' and 'BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE LESBIAN'. The lettering is black on a strong pink background. They measure one and a half inches in diameter.

The logo (winner of a competition in BI-MONTHLY No.2, designed by John Barker) is printed in black on yellow-gold. It is one and a quarter inches in diameter.
The badges were printed at the Badge Shop, Earlham Street, Covent Garden, London. Our thanks to Malcolm at the Badge Shop and to Guy Chapman.
If you would like some of these badges, send a stamped addressed envelope and money, cheque or postal order (payable to L.B.G.) to The London Bisexual Group, BM BI, London WC1N 3XX.


BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE GAY
BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE LESBIAN
BISEXUAL

New play about Vita Sackville-West

Lavender Menace, Edinburgh's lesbian and gay community bookshop, is co-producing an original play in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The play, VITA, is a celebration of Vita Sackville-West - lover of Virginia Woolf, novelist, poet and traveller - who inspired mad passion in other women from her childhood right through her old age. Sigrid Nielsen's two-woman show is based on the words of Vita herself, her lovers and her friends. VITA will be performed by Focus Theatre Company (Scotland) at 2pm from 19-31 August at Lister Housing Co-op, 36a Lauriston Place. The performance lasts 90 minutes and the price of admission will be £2.25 (or £1.75 for OAPs, students and the unwaged).

VITA & HAROLD

Portrait of a Bisexual Marriage

Vita Sackville-West was married to Harold Nicolson, who was a Member of Parliament. He was also bisexual. Harold spent a lot of his time living in London. But the family home was Sissinghurst Castle in Kent. This is now partly a museum devoted to the couple, but is best known for its garden - one of the most beautiful in Britain.

The design of the garden was the major project that Vita and Harold undertook together. They exchanged long letters about the smallest details of its layout.
The story of Vita and Harold's life together is told by their son Nigel Nicolson in PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE, 'a remarkable and superb book'(The Spectator).
First published in 1973, PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE has become a classic among literary biographies. It is an extraordinary love story, a marriage that was about as unconventional as could be but which in some way worked...miraculously. With acute perception, Nigel Nicolson tells of his parents' remarkable partnership - bounded by mutual infidelity, backed by deep love - and of Vita's wild, irrational love affair with Violet Trefusis which came so close to tearing them apart for ever.
PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE is published by FUTURA PUBLICATIONS at £2.95

Lavender Menace
Lesbian and Gay
BOOKSHOP
11A FORTH ST.
EDINBURGH.
EH1 3LE.
TELEPHONE
031-556 0079

OFF PINK PUBLISHING

The group working on the publication of a book/booklet about 'experiences of bisexuality' has had two further meetings. The publication will include interviews with bisexual women and men talking about their lives and their experience of being bisexual. It is hoped it will give a positive image of bisexuality and show a variety of forms of bisexual lifestyle among a selection of women and men of different ages.

what do you think about...?

Also featured will be shorter comments from bisexual people on such topics as fantasies, celibacy, long-term relationships, marriage, sex, masturbation, coming out, family, friends and children. Encapsulate your thoughts on these topics. Send us your fears, your pearls of wisdom, your joy, your anger.

OFF-PINK PUBLISHING,
c/o London Bisexual Group,
BM BI, London WC1N 3XX

London Bisexual Group celebrates its fourth birthday

The London Bisexual Group celebrates its fourth birthday on September 1st. Everyone is invited to join the festivities at THE JUNGLE, London's newest lesbian and gay nightclubbing spot. THE JUNGLE happens every Monday night at Buzby's, 157 Charing Cross Road, WC2. We'll be there on Monday September 2nd after the early evening social at THE FALLEN ANGEL. Entrance to THE JUNGLE costs £1 before 11pm, £2 before 12 and £3 after.

Bisexuality and the Politics of Sex ~ Conference in Edinburgh ~ October 19 & 20

see page 8

Ban on bisexual groups lifted

Bisexual groups are no longer banned from booking meeting space at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. At a packed meeting of members of the Centre, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London on June 9th, it was recommended by a vote of 162 to 94 (with 20 abstentions) that the Management Committe should allow bisexual groups to meet at the Centre.

Speaking to the meeting bisexual women and men strongly affirmed their identity as lesbians and gay men. But they insisted that to deny their bisexuality would be dishonest. Where were they to go if rejected by the lesbian an gay community?

Spike Aldridge, one of the workers at the Centre, testified eloquently to the valuable contributions made by individual volunteers to the running of the Centre.

The votes against lifting the ban came mostly from a caucus of women who have persistently aimed to prevent bisexuals and S&M groups from meeting in the new building.

It is up to the management committee alone to enact changes in the Centre's constitution. So some bisexual members of the Centre were dubious as to whether the committee would abandon its stance on bisexuality and adhere to the wishes of the members. Be this as it may, two meetings of bisexual groups have since gone ahead at the Centre. People from the London Bisexual Group met there to plan future activities. And Off Pink Publishing held a working session on their forthcoming book about 'experiences of bisexuality'.

What do we do, now we're not banned?

Fallen Angel welcomes bisexual group from Heaven

The London Bisexual Group has been meeting regularly every Tuesday evening for almost four years now. The regular venue - Heaven - is now however to change. The refurbishment of the club and difficulties in providing bar staff early in the evening have forced the Management of Heaven to withdraw the facilities provided for the group.

In many ways Heaven had excellent spaces for the group to use. Large areas for non-competitive games. Small quiet areas for discussion, counselling, meetings with speakers and other activities such as massage. Free entry to the late-night disco was also a great attraction. Heaven never charged the group anything for use of the facilities, including use of video equipment. They positively welcomed us, Tuesdays being their 'mixed' night when the club was neither exclusively gay, nor exclusively male. Group members enjoyed this immensely, feeling that in the club it didn't matter who you were or what your sex or sexuality was. There aren't many gay clubs in the country which adopt such an open door policy.

Relations with staff at Heaven became somewhat strained towards the end of the group's stay there. But a move was on the agenda for other reasons. Despite 'mixed' and 'alternative' evenings Heaven's abiding image has always been that of a macho gay male club. Many women said that they would never come to L.B.G. meetings because of this.

The group has now settled into THE FALLEN ANGEL pub in Graham Street, Islington, and it would appear that the numbers of women attending the meetings has already increased. The pub is bright, airy and relaxed, with the feel of a 'brasserie'. It sells coffee and food, as well as the usual real ales, beers, spirits and soft drinks. And there are magazines and newspapers lying around to browse through. The pub also stages exhibitions of works by lesbian and gay artists.

Meetings take place on Mondays at 8.00pm. On the first Monday of the month we will spend time socialising in the bar. And on other Mondays there will be discussions (sometimes with guest speakers) in the upstairs room.

women's evening

I'd like to suggest women organise an evening at the Fallen Angel on September 9th. There will be a meeting at my house on AUGUST 15th to plan this. If you are interested phone me, Juliet on 01-609 6356 before 10.00pm.

women's contact

Any women interested in meetings of the London Women's Bisexual Group should telephone Diana on 01-223 6895 for further information. The group meets informally in members' homes.

Brighton festival

Brighton B.A.N. (Brighton Bisexual Action Network) continues to meet fortnightly. For further information contact B.A.N., c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton. As we went to press, the group was planning a Sunday afternoon festival to generate interest in the group. The festival was to take place on July 28th at Kemptown Pier.

the times they aren't a-changing

Dear London Bisexual Group,

Thanks for your letter giving me contacts in my area. The problem is it was intercepted by my mother - it was supposedly ripped in the post - it's possible. Anyway the outcome is I want to cancel my subscription to BI-MONTHLY and I would be grateful if you didn't send me any more correspondance.

I know I probably sound odd, but if you could forget I existed or was a member and destroy my address I would be grateful.

I must thank you for your help while I was down in London. I will remain in your debt, but now I'm back in the North it is a different world. I hope you understand and carry out my requests.

Thank you.

L.B.G. - We understand.

Bisexuality in the Gay Press

One good thing which seems to have come out of the controversy over the ban from the Centre is that the gay movement and the gay press have at least recognised the existence of bisexuality and have begun tentative moves towards discussing the issue.

Admittedly in most of the gay press one searched in vain for how the members of the Centre voted on whether or not bisexual groups should be banned.

spectrum of sexuality

The June issue of GAY TIMES featured a five page spread on bisexual people. 'Though it's often assumed that on a personal level bisexuals get the best of both worlds",'writes Kris Kirk in his introduction, 'the straight world gives them the same stick as it gives lesbians and gays. And bisexuals are often treated with great distrust by gay people. Common reactions range from envy through disbelief that such a thing actually exists But one of the most common reactions is that bisexuals 'confuse the issue'. As with heterosexuals,when it comes to sexuality many gay people prefer simple either/or distinctions regarding sexuality, rather than taking on board the (admittedly more complex) view that sexuality is a broad spectrum with complete hetero- and homosexuality being on the two extremities within which most of us fall.'

inadequate labels

The feature is largely taken up by interviews with three bisexual people - two men and one woman. David Burkle was one of the founders of the London Bisexual Group. Since setting it up in 1981, he has been one of its staunchest protagonists, taking on an enormous workload.

He talks about getting married in the '60s and about coming to terms with his bisexuality.

'Though I was prepared to acknowledge the gay side of myself, I felt that just to label myself as gay was inadequate, even dishonest. Because it indicated that I was downgrading my central relationship, which was still very important to me.'

On the subject of things like the ban from the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, David says,'It's sad, because you hope for a bit more sensitivity from gay people. Of course there are many gay people who don't think twice about 'accepting' us, and indeed we get gay people coming to the group because they like the easy-going atmosphere.'

I had to come out twice

Kate Fearnley helped set up the Edinburgh Bisexual Group earlier this year.'I had to come out twice,' she said, 'first as a lesbian and then as a bisexual. The second time was infinitely more difficult. All my lesbian and gay friends were totally confused by it. It's much more of a political issue. Once you've come out, People find it difficult to cope with if you're seen to be 'going back' in any way.'

Asked about people using the label bisexual to improve their image, Kate thought,'A.I.D.S. is going to make bisexuality terribly untrendy very quickly. The media is already beginning to project an image of bisexuals as that terrible group who are transmitting quote/unquote The Gay Plague to the 'Real World'.'

natural sexuality

In contrast to David and Kate, Stephen Bleach, who is deputy editor of a straight 'men's' magazine, is not a 'groups person'. 'I think groups are usually really wanky, and besides I don't think there is such a thing as Bisexual Consciousness as there is Gay Consciousness.... We're talking about a category of people who have accepted the fact that they can't be categorised. To me it's the most completely natural sexuality anyone can have.'

What's the world coming to? They'll have women doing it next.......

masturbation

The July issue of GAY TIMES features fascinating thoughts on that taboo subject - masturbation. Julia Read talked to eighteen men - 'both gay and straight'.

On the subject of 'requested solitary masturbation during sex' the one bisexual man, Andrew, said he 'gets a buzz from masturbating for a male lover but feels inhibited if his partner is female.' It would be interesting to see a parallel feature on lesbian, bisexual and straight women's feelings about masturbation.

bridging the gap

IAN DUNN (the editor of GAY SCOTLAND) gave a fairly positive review to OUT IN THE OPEN (People talking about being gay or bisexual) by Stephanie Norris and Emma Read. (See BI-MONTHLY No.9 for our reaction to this book.)

'The book's great strength is its perspectives on married and bisexual people. And these chapters set me to thinking about my own attitudes as a very gay-identified homosexual!' said Ian. 'It is dedicated to bridging the gap between gays, bisexuals and heterosexuals, and about greater tolerance. It deserves to succeed.'

The Fourth Man

Geoffrey King, however, only gets four out of ten for his review of THE FOURTH MAN. This 'first gay, catholic horror film' was directed by the Dutchman, Paul Verhoeven. 'Our hero, Gerard, a gay writer, gets involved with Christine, in order to be near Herman, her boy-friend,' asserts Geoffrey. Not so! Gerard accepts Christine's invitation to spend the night with her and he proves a more considerate and proficient lover than she has ever known. All this before he even discovers that she knows the beautiful Herman.

Despite being a 'wham bam thank you ma'am' type, Herman is not averse to a bit of steamy passion with Gerard - in the crypt of all places. Christine's three former husbands are laid to rest there. They all died mysterious deaths. Who will be THE FOURTH MAN? See it. It's fun.

Square Peg

SQUARE PEG (the glossy lesbian and gay arts magazine) ran a very interesting article on the bans from the Centre and on the SEXUAL FRINGE (the newly formed group discussing all forms of sexuality, which meets at the Centre on Tuesday evenings).

'Recent events have shown,' it was suggested,'that in trying to reject heterosexually-defined stereotypes of what our sexuality is, we have in fact constructed homosexually-defined stereotypes.'

The controversy shows, the article goes on to say, 'that there is an "acceptable" and an "unacceptable" face of lesbian and gay sexuality.' The sado-masochists, bisexuals, paedophiles, transvestites and transsexuals and members of the lesbian and gay youth movement 'overlap prescribed definitions of both homosexual and heterosexual behaviour. And that is what makes them apparently dangerous'to a community bent on respectability. Some of us do not fit in to 'any general or current theory of feminism, lesbian feminism or lesbian and gay sexual politics' and we should be allowed to define ourselves.

cont'd on Page 6.

Mix with us

The June issue of GAY TIMES featured a letter from David H. of London about the banning of bisexuals from the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. 'Why ban the bisexual groups?' he asks. 'Why ban any group if it sympathises with our cause? Sympathetic 'straight' should also be made welcome. This would broaden understanding and reduce our isolation. People should be encouraged to mix with us. It is no use screaming for understanding while shutting ourselves off from those who want to support us.'

Julian Meldrum

In his weekly column, MELDRUM ON AIDS, in CAPITAL GAY, Julian Meldrum turned to the subject of coming out.

'Whereas some women have chosen to become lesbian to express their political and moral support for other women - I feel that even more of us, in a different and better society, might choose to become homosexual if we felt we had the choice...Affirming a lesbian or gay identity widens the options that all people have, in how they choose to lead their lives. Ideally, it could take us towards a society without homophobia or sexism, in which bisexuality becomes possible and people can relate to one another at all levels as people, rather than as members of a particular gender.'

Time Out

TIME OUT magazine reported the London Bisexual Group's move from Heaven on its gay listings page. This wasn't reported elsewhere in the gay press. The short article concluded by suggesting that the group should make the Lesbian and Gay Centre its new home, now that the ban has been lifted. (D.S.)

Greenwich festival

The London Bisexual Group also provided a stall with books, magazines, badges and information hand-outs at the Lesbian and Gay Festival at Goldsmiths College in London. The festival was organised by the Greenwich Lesbian and Gay Group. The day was a qualified success. But members of the London Women's Bisexual Group held a small but successful women-only workshop.

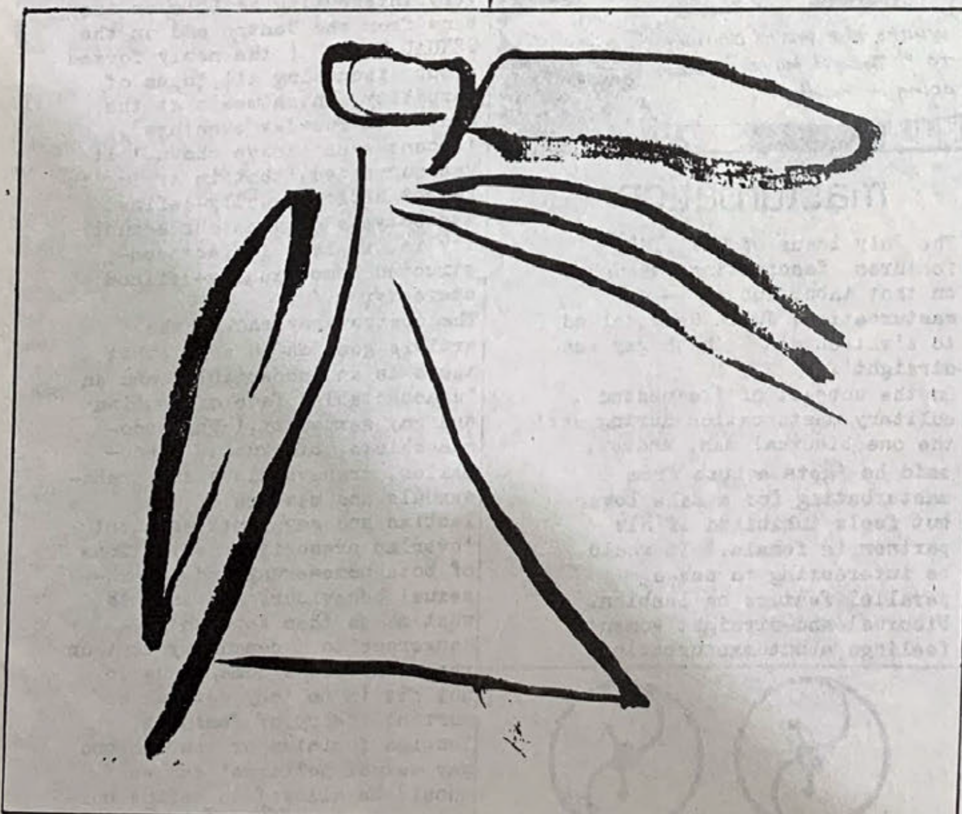
picnic

Ten members of L.B.G. braved the possibility of thunder storms to gather on Hampstead Heath for a Sunday afternoon picnic on 16th June. This was a special activity planned to coincide with events taking place throughout June as a part of the Lesbian and Gay Pride festivities.

blackmail made easy

Five airmen and two soldiers based in Cyprus with British armed forces there went on trial in June - for espionage. It was alleged that these bisexual and gay men were blackmailed into selling secrets to foreign agents. Blackmail is made easy by the fact that discovery of homosexual activity can lead to dismissal from the forces and even imprisonment. And the problems don't stop there.

The five-yearly review of the Armed Forces disciplinary rules comes before Parliament next year and the Campaign for Homosexual Equality is launching a major lobby of MPs. They would welcome, in confidence, information about anyone who has been dismissed from the forces in the last three years. Contact Nigel Warner, 274 Upper Street, London N1.



cottaging, cruising, and the police

Lambeth Council in London recently took a major step to combat police harassment of gay and bisexual men. Public lavatory attendants have been asked to report the names and numbers of any loitering policemen to town hall officials.

But the question remains of how the lavatory attendants will recognise plain clothes policemen. The 'pretty police' still continue to entrap bisexual & gay men into 'acts of gross indecency'.

pretty police arrest Jimi Somerville

Jimi Somerville (ex-Bronski Beat) was recently convicted of 'gross indecency' after being arrested with his boy-friend by two plain clothes policemen. The two police men were pretending to have sex in the public lavatory in Hyde Park. A teacher in Chesterfield is in danger of losing his job after being arrested in a 'cottage' by four plain clothes policemen. Apparently there is a list of professions from which the courts are obliged to notify employers of any employee convicted of offences related to homosexuality.

GALOP (the Gay London Police Monitoring Group) has warned of increased police activity in and around 'cottages' and would like to help anyone arrested. Telephone: 01-278 6215

murder

Meanwhile Michael Smith, a New Zealander, was found murdered on Clapham Common, London, on Saturday 6th July. Clapham Common is a well-known gay 'cruising' area. Michael's body was found almost two hours after the police were alerted to a gang of four youths who chased Brian Deer, a Sunday Times journalist. The police did not respond to Brian Deer's phone call, because he didn't want to leave his name.

It is sadly too late for Michael Smith, but GALOP is also launching a major new project to monitor crimes against bisexual and gay people. If you have been the victim of a crime, they would like to hear about how you felt, whether you told the police and if not why not, how the police responded and how the case was dealt with if it came to court. WRITE to GALOP, Victims of Crime Survey, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X OAP or send for a questionnaire. (D.S.)

Tom Robinson

EXCLUSIVE ~ full, updated text of GLAD TO BE GAY

When GLAD TO BE GAY was first released, its chorus quickly became a singalong anthem. But more than a hint of bitterness in Tom Robinson's voice posed the important question: 'How can we be glad to be gay, when we are being attacked from all sides?' At the Lesbian and Gay Pride Carnival, Tom sang this updated version of the song. The last verse is particularly relevant, in the light of bad feeling between certain factions recently. 'How can we be happy this way, if we oppress each other?'

Below we print an extract from an interview Tom gave a few years ago on Claire Rayner's Casebook.

'after I came out as gay, I found relationships with women much easier . . .'

After I came out as gay and identified myself as being homosexual, I found that relationships with women became much easier, just generally making friends with them. But also, curiously enough, I found that sexually I was more attracted to women after releasing the gay side of me. And when you've got all that bottled up inside you, you can't look at any other part of your personality, because you're obsessed.

According to the Kinsey report, published in America in 1949, which is a long time ago now, sexuality just goes on an even scale. You've got people completely heterosexual here at one end, which is very, very rare. And most people who go through their lives as heterosexual will also have an aspect of their personality where they are also interested in the same sex. And at the other end you've got gay people who are only interested in their own sex. And in between you've got the rest of us. And it's just a matter of how things turn out, where you actually are on balance on the scale.

It's very, very odd that, in recent years, I've found myself to be bisexual, which I'd never expected, through having been much more loose and open about being homosexual in the first place.

Glad to be Gay

The British Police are the best in the world
I don't believe one of these stories I've heard
About pretty policemen in leather & jeans
Showing their leg through a split in the seams
Leering at people & leading them on
Then running them in when they start to respond
The press all ignore it, they don't want to see
Except when the case is... a Tory MP

Pictures of naked young women are best
In the News of the Screws and the popular press
They plaster their pages with bingo & tits
Then add all the scandal and slander that fits
The women at Greenham they smear & despise
They crucified Tatchell with absolute lies
If it's paedophile teachers or lesbian nuns
If it's vicious & fictional... it's there in the Sun

And now there's a cancer that's mainly for gays
It's brutal & fatal & slowly invades
The moral majority like it a lot
It's the wages of sin or the judgement of God
The medics are baffled & caught on the run
They say it's a nightmare that's barely begun
The tests are uncertain, the symptoms are vague
While the toilets of heaven are...
Still spreading the plague

Now enemies everywhere laugh at the sight
Of gay against lesbian, dyke against dyke
I don't give a shit about who's in the wrong
The ins & the outs or the faults in this song
We're getting oppressed & arrested & banned
While we bicker politically where we should stand
Forget the aggression from everywhere else
We do such a wonderful job...
Oppressing ourselves

CHORUS: Sing if you're glad to be gay
Sing if you're happy that way, hey
Sing if you're glad to be gay
Sing if you're happy that way

Words & music by Tom Robinson:
with grateful acknowledgement to Eric Presland for his help rewriting Verse One!

It wasn't before I knew the least
That I could expand on a visible crease
Too understand
Too fear the lies
Too want the most
(Will the baby cry)
A strange dividence
My earliest state
The future of life
A need to create
Invisible barriers
Discreat and neat
Flamboyance in camoflage
Or a lonely street...

Anon.

RADICAL LESBIAN AND GAY IDENTIFIED BISEXUAL NETWORK
BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE LESBIAN AND GAY

RADICAL ▽▽▽▽▽▽▽▽▽
LESBIAN + GAY
I·D·E·N·T·I·F·I·E·D
BISEXUAL
NETWORK ▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼

The banner on the right in the photograph above is that of the Radical Lesbian and Gay-Identified Bisexual Network. This is a loose-knit group of women and men working for radical change. For more information contact:
Pink Dandelion,
36 Mackie Avenue,
Brighton BN1 8RA

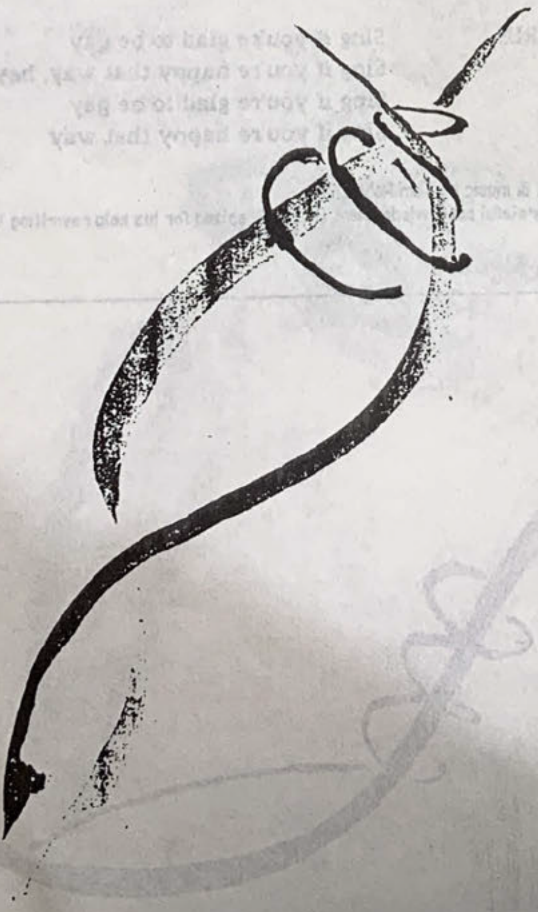
This is an extract from the Network's manifesto:
We believe that sexual oppression is both a result of and an integral part of our patriarchal and capitalist society. Therefore we recognise the links between the oppression of people because of their sex, sexuality, gender identity, disability, race, age, class, nationality, religion and oppression linked with class and economic status.

Bisexuality and the Politics of Sex - Conference in Edinburgh - October 19 & 20

The Edinburgh Bisexual Group continues to meet on every second and fourth Friday of each month at the Lesbian and Gay Centre, 58a Broughton Street. The group is already making plans for a nationwide conference - Bisexuality and the Politics of Sex. Workshop discussions are planned on: sex; heterosexism; power and sex; relationships with the lesbian and gay movement; and non-prescriptive feminism. bisexuality; sexuality; isolation; and 'polymorphous perversity'. Other suggestions for workshops would be welcome.

The group is also making a plea to anyone in the Edinburgh area who can help in accommodating for the weekend any visitors from out of town. It is hoped there will be lots.

The fee for the conference is 75p for the unwaged and a minimum of £2.00 for the waged (with another £1 for every thousand pounds earned over £2,000). Advance booking would be most welcome. Send cheques or postal orders (payable to Bisexual Conference Organising Group or B.C.O.G.) to:
Edinburgh Bisexual Group,
c/o Lesbian and Gay Centre,
58a Broughton Street,



HEPATITIS B VACCINE

Hepatitis B is a serious sexually transmissible disease which affects gay men in Britain, Western Europe and North America. (It also affects drug addicts and their families, some health workers, and millions of people of both sexes and all ages in Asia, Africa and South America.)

You can contract hepatitis B by having sexual intercourse or more direct, blood-to-blood, contact with someone who is infected. You don't even need to have multiple partners: one exposure could be enough to give you this disease. A significant but small minority of gay men in London are actively infected with the virus: 40%-50% of gay men who have been tested in London sexually transmitted disease clinics show evidence of past infection.

➡ *HEPATITIS B IS NOW A PREVENTABLE DISEASE*

The vaccine has now been available on NHS prescription from general practitioners for several years. It need cost you no more than £2, and is free if you are in full-time education or claiming supplementary allowance.

Before approaching your GP, you should go to a sexually transmitted disease clinic for a simple free blood test which will tell you whether you actually need to be vaccinated.

If or when the vaccine is prescribed you get a course of three injections in your arm, spread over six months. As the vaccine is in short supply, you may have to wait a few weeks for the chemist to get it for you. Full immunity may take a month or so to develop, after the end of the injections.

New Zealanders plan major article on bisexuality

PINK TRIANGLE
PUBLISHING COLLECTIVE
P.O. BOX 507
WELLINGTON
NEW ZEALAND

Dear Friends,
Pink Triangle is planning a major article on bisexuals and bisexuality in New Zealand, intended for publication in September.

I am currently preparing this article, and am finding it more difficult than I had expected to obtain definitive information on the subject. There must be very little material available, at least in New Zealand. I am of course also using as a resource the bisexuals themselves.

I write to you in the hope that you might send or refer me to some material that might be of help. I would also very much appreciate some more information on the London Bisexual Group itself - its history, its activities etc.

I also want to explore how bisexuals define and recognise their sexuality, what stresses their bisexuality imposes on their lives, how they feel they are viewed by gays and lesbians and how they cope with the inevitable pressure to establish socially convenient and acceptable heterosexual relationships and to deny or downgrade the homosexual or lesbian component of their personalities. Any guidance you can give me on those issues would be of great use to me in writing this article.

Yours sincerely,
Nick Barnett,
Pink Triangle Publishing
Collective

Bimonthly read in House of Commons

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A OAA

Dear Bi-Monthly,
There appears to be considerable confusion and misunderstanding on the whole purpose and meaning of the Bill to Prohibit Female Circumcision and I feel it would be helpful if I answered the criticism made.

There is a great deal of support for my Bill from many Groups, amongst which the Council for Racial Equality is a single voice that opposes it. The Minority Rights Group, The Royal College of Nursing, The General Medical Council, The Royal College of Surgeons, The Medical Women's Federation, The Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have given full support. Postponing implementation of the Bill is totally unnecessary. It has been known that Parliament has been considering this legislation for three years or more. The sooner this legislation is on the statute book, the sooner real, positive education can start and people will take this matter seriously.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Marion Roe, M.P.

FORWARD with SISTER LINKS

Wells, Somerset.

Dear Bi-Monthly,
If anyone else was interested in the Female Circumcision article in Issue No. 9, they might like to get in touch with FORWARD.

FORWARD was formed from WAGFEI (Women's Action Group on Female Excision and Infibulation) when WAGFEI encountered strong opposition in Africa, largely on account of its name. The objective of eradicating so-called female circumcision remains, but is now part of a much larger objective of promoting good health amongst women and children through research into key areas of need and advancing action programmes aimed at meeting these needs.

FORWARD also produces a quarterly, SISTER LINKS, including - in the June '85 edition - an update on the female cicumcision campaign; a feature on the problems of women's education; an interview with a Tigray woman on the gains of women in the current revolution; reports on what Western women can do about female circumcision in the Sudan; and on the force-feeding of girls in the Sahel.

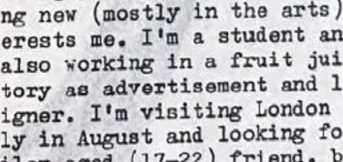
FORWARD also runs the Sister programme through which women in Britain can build direct contacts with African women.

FORWARD's offices are at the Africa Centre, 38, King Street, London WC 2E 8JT.
TEL. 01-379 6889
SISTER LINKS costs £1.20

Yours
Terry Browning.

punk seeks friends

19 years old, boyish, 5'7" tall, blond, 'trendie post-punk', bisexual guy from Finland. Everything new (mostly in the arts) interests me. I'm a student and I am also working in a fruit juice factory as advertisement and logo designer. I'm visiting London early in August (17-22) and looking for similar aged (17-22) friend, bisexual, gay or straight girl or guy, for fun and lasting friendship (and for visiting clubs). Write soon c/o L.B.G., BM BI, London WC1N 3XX.



Friends wanted in Hull...

I'm an active member in the German Bisexual Movement mentioned in Bi-Monthly No.9.
In September I'm going to England to spend a year as an assistant teacher in North Humberside and I would like to meet other bisexuals in the Hull area.
Write c/o L.B.G.

and North Humberside

Hi! I'm 26 years old, female, feel rather isolated. I would like a pen-friend/relationship with the right person in my vicinity. I live in North Humberside, a long way from London. Am I the only person in Humberside?.
Write to J.S. c/o L.B.G.

Blind want tapes of Bi-Monthly

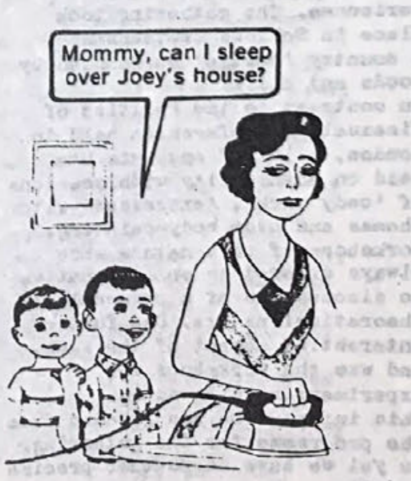
Tufnell Park,
London

Dear Bimonthly,
I saw your publication mentioned in MEN'S ANTI-SEXIST NEWSLETTER which I was scanning for LEFT OUT - a monthly magazine of alternative news on tape for blind and partially sighted men and women. I would be interested to know if BIMONTHLY is available on tape. If it is not and you would be interested in making it available, please let me know. The Alternative Talking Newspapers Collective, of which LEFT OUT is a part, has produced a pamphlet to help magazines produce taped versions.

Alison Behr

raising your consciousness?

Is anyone in London interested in forming a consciousness-raising group? The group would ideally consist of six people committed to meeting once a week for six weeks to discuss their own experience of all aspects of bisexuality.


Mommy, can I sleep over Joey's house?

The Bisexuals & Married Gays Support Group

The Bisexual and Married Gays Support Group held its first meeting in July 1984 in St. Leonards. At first it was known by the informal title the MAD group (Married and Divorced!) but it soon became clear that it needed a more formal title and became the Married Gays Support Group. We define ourselves as - 'a self-help, caring and support association for married, separated and divorced lesbians and gay men, for the partners of married lesbians and gay men, and for bisexuals whether married or not.' We define our aim as - 'to provide a caring and supportive environment in which our people can identify with others in a similar situation and lessen the burden of their problems by discussion or just by listening to the experience of others.'

Helplines

Within weeks of the setting up of the group it became clear that help is needed on a national scale, and from February 1985 we began to set up local helplines wherever a suitable person volunteered - being'suitable' only means someone with experience of counselling work who has knowledge (usually through their own experience) of the problems of being married and bisexual or gay.

In recent months we have opened helplines in London, Coventry, Gloucester, Orpington, Bath, Bristol, Salisbury and Dorchester - apart from the original helplines and Married Lesbian Line here in St. Leonards.

We are now trying more and more to build up the membership not only from married gays, but from bisexuals who have not been married; we have found that there is a tremendous overlap of problems and experiences. In order to become self-funding we now have a formal membership arrangement and ask £5 for a year's membership, with partners having free membership.

We hold meetings in the Hastings and St. Leonards area twice a month, and we are experimenting with the idea of an informal 'drop-in' afternoon in a local cafe. Hopefully meetings in London and possibly Gloucester or Bristol will follow in the near future.

Most of the telephone calls we receive are from people who really need help or someone just to talk to - and we have the people available to help them. Sadly, having the telephone number so public can be a problem! We've had heavy breathers, people who think that I might be able to help them 'privately'(You'll be lucky!) and some brainless moron who wanted to know the length of my willy! Worst of all, I even had calls from someone who needed all sorts of help and advice about his divorce. I made several calls to Gay Switchboard and GLAD (Gay Legal Advice) and I gave him all the information he asked for. I phoned back some weeks later to see how he was getting on, only to learn that he had not used one scrap of the information I had painstakingly obtained for him! He now deals direct with Gay Switchboard and GLAD!

Manchester meeting

On August 24th we are holding a meeting at the Manchester Town Hall at 7.30pm in order to try to set up some kind of local contact with an eventual view to having helplines in such places Leeds, Halifax, Bradford, Hull, Liverpool - and anywhere else where we can find a volunteer. We know that there is a need, because of the calls we get from those areas telling of 'nowhere to go, no one to talk to!'

At the last meeting we agreed to change the name of the organisation to 'The Bisexual and Married Gays Support Group' in order to reflect our growth and scope of our activities.

There is no easy way of dealing with the problems which beset our people. Maybe just being here is a step in the right direction, but we really need to re-educate and change society before the prejudice and lies are removed for good. (Mike Blackmore)

My wife is gay

Many of Kath's friends cannot understand how and why I can be so understanding about her gayness. To their'why?' I answer 'why not?' Why shouldn't I understand? Give me reasons why I shouldn't be understanding, not why I should. I shouldn't need to defend my position at all. Nor should they. To me it's very clear. One of the facets of the jewel that is my wife is that she is gay, but there is more to Kath than gayness.

This is the beginning of an article in THE OTHER IMAGE, the newsletter of The Bisexual and Married Gays Support Group. It is available in exchange for two first class stamps and a stamped addressed envelope from this address,

The Bisexuals and
Married Gays Support Gro
66A Church Rd.
St. Leonards on Sea
E. Sussex TN37 6EE
tel. (0424) 435931

Not to be confused with the above is the London Married Gays Group which is for gay men only.

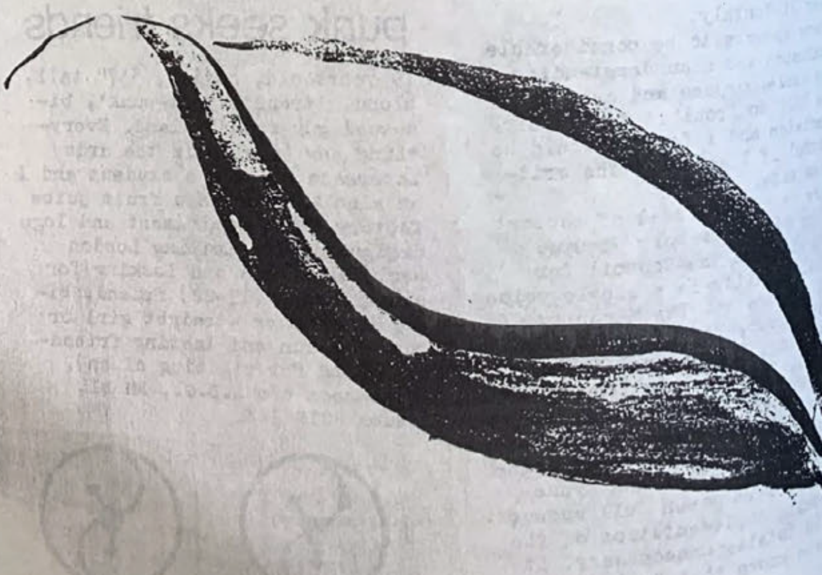
This group offers social contact with other married gay men in the London area. For further information, telephone Barrie on 01-527 0961 before 10.30pm.

Body painting in Breidenstein

In June bisexual women and men gathered from all over Germany for a weekend of shared experiences. The gathering took place in Schloss Breidenstein, a country 'castle' surrounded by woods and hills.

In contrast to the Politics of Bisexuality Conferences held in London, a lot of emphasis was laid on physicality with sessions of 'body work', 'exercises' with themes and even body-painting. Workshops of this nature were always offered as an alternative to discussions of a personal or theoretical nature. One further interesting aspect of the weekend was the workshops for experimenting with sound.

This information was gleaned from the programme for the gathering. As yet we have no further precise details.



Defend

Gay's The Word

The courts have not yet decided whether or not to commit Gay's The Word directors for trial on charges of importing obscene books. But the campaign to raise funds to cover defence costs goes on. American novelist, Edmund White, read a newly finished story in the bookshop to an audience of twenty who each contributed £1. Sue Winter was there.

A Good Read from Edmund White

In case you have not yet read anything by Edmund White, or indeed in case you have never heard of him, I thought I would take a little time to write a few words about him.
My introduction to his books was via the person I live with. 'States of Desire' came into the house and ordinary living ceased until I had finished reading it. The book is subtitled 'Travels in Gay America'; a country I have visited but never wanted to explore. I have changed my mind. I intend to visit the States again and this time with Edmund White's evocative descriptions Still ringing in my heart, take a longer slower journey and see what I missed. I'm no great reviewer of books so I would like to quote what Christopher Isherwood said about it.
'Fascinating and deeply disturbing. This amusing and colorful tour uses the predicament of the homosexual minority to demonstrate what is very wrong with the social health of this country.'

Which is not to say that the book is in any way depressing. Often very amusing it reveals a lot about its author to the extent that when I met him I felt I was seeing an old friend. This sense of familiarity stems from the tremendously compassionate view of the world that Edmund White exudes both in his work and in person.

Should you want to read the book that first brought White to the attention of his now quite extensive public, I must warn you that you may have difficulty in obtaining a copy at this time. 'The Joy of Gay Sex' is one of the books seized by H.M. Customs on route to or from Gay's The Word Bookshop.

It was in this bookshop that I heard Edmund White read a story that he had just finished writing. 'Post Mortem' deals with a gay couple, one of whom dies from A.I.D.S., and the continuing life of the one left behind. A story that copes accurately with death and with the hopefulness of life. We laughed. All of us. He struck chords with everyone and lifted me personally out from a grief over losing someone close, in a way that a stranger could not have been expected to do. As yet unpublished, look out for 'Post Mortem' and grab the opportunity to read it, when it makes it into print.

The most recent book, 'A Boy's Own Story', is perhaps my favourite. A delightful account of growing up. If only I could see my own youth so clearly, perhaps I would write about it too. Richly written, it is a joy to open this book at random and reread bits like visiting an old and trusted friend.

Two early short novels have been combined in one book by Picador; 'Forgetting Elenor' and 'Nocturnes for the King of Naples'. I'm saving them for when I go on holiday so I can savour them at leisure. So when I return I will update you. Writings by Edmund White can also be found in 'Aphrodisiac', a collection of fiction from the American gay agazine, Christopher Street, and in 'The View from Christopher Street', which is a selection of non-fiction. Both books are packked full of many good reasons to buy them. Not least of all a story by George Whitmore called 'The Black Widow'. I won't give the plot away, suffice it to say that I laughed till the spiders complained about the noise.
However that is another story all together. All of the books mentioned can be obtained from Gay's The Word bookshop, with the exception of 'The Joy of Gay Sex the future purchasing of which rests with the courts or a trip to Amsterdam. Which is where I'm going on hoiliday....
By way of conclusion I will say that Edmund White is a fine example of an author who can produce that much maligned but to me magical formula 'A Good Read'. (SUE WINTER)

Gay's The Word Bookshop,
66 Marchmont Street,
London WC1
(nearest tube: Russell Sq.)

Onions: an allegory

Once there was an onion who just knew there had to be more to life than the crap he was given about how all onions were basically the same - though coming in various colours, shapes and sizes -and how one day he would female onion and together they would grow lots of little onions in their mortgaged square foot of soil and live happily till the day they would go on the conveyor belt to the great onion field in the sky to meet the Supreme Onion etc. etc.; so one day he went off by himself and - although it was supposed to be selfish and a sin - he began to peel off a few of his skins and he was very surprised, because with each layer he took off a few of the attitudes and values that were not really his - but what he was taught to believe - came off too and he kept peeling until he found something close to his real self and then he was free to be himself and to love any onion he chose and he wanted to tell all the other onions how they too could rip away all those rotten layers of so-called values and morals and be free; if only they would listen.

Pat White

BOOKS: Colin MacInnes and Martina Navratilova

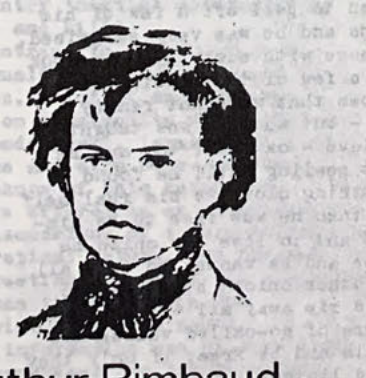
loving the both

ABSOLUTE MACINNES:
THE BEST OF COLIN MACINNES,
edited by TONY GOULD,
published by ALLISON AND BUSBY,
318 pages, £4.95

The most thrilling episode in this 'offbeat autobiography' is a superbly sensual encounter between the adolescent Colin MacInnes and a young aboriginal man. After a hot day picking fruit, the two swim in a nearby river and daub themselves with slimy mud. As the mud dries on Colin's body, the Aborigine traces patterns in it - as a sort of initiation rite. 'While he did this, he examined me minutely, his hands wandering promiscuously, familiarly, but without violation. As I lay next to this boy-man by the river, I felt an exhaltation - he was promising me that the strength he possessed would soon be mine as well. I reached up and kissed his muddy face, but he laughed, rose briskly to his feet, dived in the stream and disappeared towards the further shore.'

Colin MacInnes is best known for his novels of London life in the '50s - CITY OF SPADES and ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS. But the majority of this book of extracts from his work is drawn from his journalistic essays. These and passages from his novels are juxtaposed to form a story of his life, work, travels and ideas.

He was the art critic for THE OBSERVER for a short time and wrote extensively for THE NEW STATESMAN and NEW SOCIETY. His contributions to the old GAY NEWS included the series CAPTAIN JOCK-STRAP'S DIARY. And in 1973 he published an extended essay on bisexuals and bisexuality entitled LOVING THEM BOTH.
The specifically bisexual/gay content of the book is small - surprisingly so, since the word 'homosexual' figures prominently in the first line of the blurb. But there is a fascinating article about the life and genius of the 19th century French poet, Arthur Rimbaud, and his tragic love-hate relationship with fellow poet, Paul Verlaine. Verlaine was happily married and settling into bourgeois respectability when Rimbaud came along to disrupt his life.



Arthur Rimbaud
gay poetic genius

In the short extract from LOVING THEM BOTH, MacInnes makes some rather sweeping statements about the incidence of bisexuality among the world's various racial groupings - all in four pages. He did however travel extensively in Europe, Australia, Africa and North and South America, and there are hints - only hints - of promiscuity. So he had experience to draw conclusions from.

This is no sexual saga, but an account of a whole man - his family, education and adolescence, his travels, his bankruptcy and illness with cancer. Interwoven with these are pieces on aspects of British life as diverse as anarchy and cricket, gardens and the trial of OZ magazine for obscenity.

Colin MacInnes may not have always been likeable or consistent, and there is much in the book to disagree with. But the writing remains provocative, incisive, humourous and fascinating. His account of adolescence (of which the river incident is part) is one of the most touching and understanding I have read. And if you want someone to suggest how you can be religious without 'a personal God, an identifiable devil, miracles... or any kind of physical afterlife', Colin MacInnes is the one to look to. (David Smith)

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junk-food, tennis and bisexuality

MARTINA NAVRATILOVA:
BEING MYSELF - The Autobiography
with George Vecsey
published by COLLINS
272 pages, £9.95

Martina Navratilova was twelve years old when the Russian army invaded Czechoslovakia. The Russians are just the latest in a long line of foreign powers to dominate her country, and Martina was not prepared to knuckle under as independance, freedom of thought and the 'spirit of free enterprise' were stifled.

This book charts the development of a 'natural talent' - playing tennis with her parents, commuting to Prague for training, gradually making her name on the international circuit. We learn how Martina conquered an addiction to junk food when she first went to the U.S. and how she worked on her body and her mind to become what she is today - the greatest woman tennis player the world has ever known.

The insights into relationships between players, the grind of the circuit, the joy of finally winning Wimbledon or the U.S. Open are fascinating. More interesting are the reasons for unexpected defeats or below par performances; who ever considers that a player might have been up all night arguing and crying with her lover?

There is enough here about Martina's sexuality and emotional life to satisfy the curiosity aroused by one of her pet hates - the gutter press. She is both open and reserved. But we learn about her first painful sexual encounter with a student boyfriend in Prague; her first head over heels affair with another woman; and her love for Rita Mae Brown, the lesbian novelist. Rita helped Martina to broaden her intellectual horizon but couldn't accept that tennis had to remain central to Martina's life. The world's number one player considers herself 'bisexual', but hates the word itself, thinking it 'creepy'. She did however use it on her application for U.S. citizenship when asked about her sexuality. Otherwise she says, 'I don't like labels. Just call me Martina.'

And that is what this book is about - Martina Navratilova being herself. Playing where she wanted to play, rather than being told what to do by the Czech Tennis Federation. Being a strong, ground-breaking woman, rather than conforming to the required gentility of women's tennis. Leading a bisexual/gay life-style, instead of bowing to pressure from her family.

An important strand in this process of self-determination is the pursuit of U.S. citizenship. 'I was born to be American' proclaims Martina proudly. The discrimination against blacks and gays, the increasing poverty and violence against women are not allowed to cast too much of a shadow across the country of her dreams. In the home of free enterprise she has been able to earn enough money to have a car for every day of the week.

She is justifiably critical of Soviet domination of Czechoslovakia. But she draws no parallels with American domination of Europe.

Read this book for the tennis and Martina's personal life and for the fascinating portrayal of life in Czechoslovakia. But beware the thinly disguised cold war rhetoric.
(David Smith)

BOOKS: Byron, Baldwin, Leduc & a northern man

bisexual classic

GIOVANNI'S ROOM by James Baldwin was originally published in 1956 and has been hailed ever since as a bisexual/gay classic. It is the soap-opera-like story of David, a young American travelling in Europe. He is torn between his attraction to men and his love for a woman, with the prospect of marriage and a conventional life.
Reading it almost thirty years after it was written, I felt a little uneasy about the somewhat dated attitudes to life and about the less than positive approach to bisexuality. However as a slice of life in the '50s, the novel is certainly interesting.

David's female lover, Hella, seems to feel that the only way of leading a fulfilling life is to settle down and get married. Giovanni relates emotionally and sexually to men as a sort of penance for his sins. He left his home, a small farming village in southern Italy, after his wife gave birth to a still-born baby. This, Giovanni thought, was a punishment from God, and he has denied himself contact with women ever since.

David is haunted by his strong sexual attraction towards men - which seems like torture to him. And he is worried by Giovanni's growing emotional attachment to him - something David never wanted.

Despite this somewhat negative portrayal of bisexuality, the novel is a powerful examination of the characters' emotions. James Baldwin delves deep into David's mind, revealing differing layers of thought and showing, very significantly, how what he thinks and what he says or does - do not necessarily match.

Since James Baldwin is a leading black writer, I was initially a little surprised that in GIOVANNI'S ROOM he was writing about white characters. But it is unlikely that many black Americans travelled in Europe in the '50s. Baldwin himself came to Europe only after establishing his reputation as a writer. The first of nine children, he grew up in Harlem where his father was a minister. For a brief time in his teens Baldwin too was a preacher. His other literary successes over the years have included the novel, ANOTHER COUNTRY and a short story collection, GOING TO MEET THE MAN. A collection of his non-fiction writings under the title THE PRICE OF THE TICKET will be published in October.
(SIMON WEIVOD)

guilt, rejection, bisexuality, love in pre-war Paris

LA BATARDE by Violette Leduc
published by VIRAGO PRESS
468 pages, £5.50

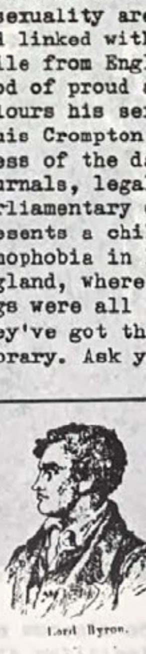
Born in Arras,France, in 1907, the illegitimate daughter of a servant and the master of the house, Violette Leduc carried a burden of guilt instilled into her by her mother, whose love she craved but never received. She was expelled from boarding school after love affairs with another pupil and with her music teacher, Hermine. Nine years living in Paris with the devoted Hermine were followed by an unhappy affair and marriage to the masochistic Gabriel, from whom she separated in 1939. Her first novel was acclaimed by Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Genet and Jean-Paul Sartre. This her autobiography, acclaimed as 'one of the most moving of our time', was first published in 1965. (S.W.)

Virago

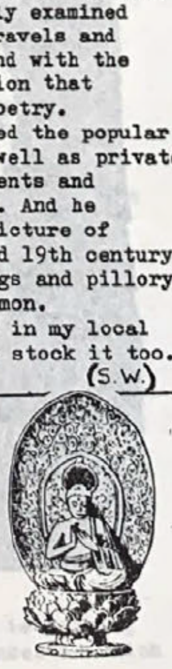
Byron ~ paedophile, bisexual, genius.

BYRON AND GREEK LOVE
by Louis Crompton
published by FABER AND FABER
419pages, £17.50

Making use of previously unpublished letters, Louis Crompton traces Byron's many homoerotic involvements - from his idealistic schoolboy enthusiasms at Harrow to the unhappy love affair at the end of his life. All aspects of Byron's bisexuality are closely examined and linked with his travels and exile from England, and with the mood of proud alienation that colours his serious poetry.
Louis Crompton examined the popular press of the day, as well as private journals, legal documents and parliamentary debates. And he presents a chilling picture of homophobia in 18th and 19th century England, where hangings and pillory-ings were all too common.
They've got this book in my local library. Ask yours to stock it too.
(S.W.)



Lord Byron.



heterosexual transvestism and the androgynous spirit

A MAN'S TALE by John Pepper
published by QUARTET, 1982

This is the 'spiritual autobiography of a northern heterosexual male. The fact that I fit two of those categories and am myself in process of resolving my upbringing with my sexuality led me to probe beyond my usual first chapter.
A recurrent theme is that of breaking out of the moulds life forces one into:

> 'I was born a boy, and that's that. You were chopped in half, botched, from the start.'

The author becomes increasingly unhappy about stereotyped male behaviour - especially as he sees it in the hack journalistic world he inhabits:

> 'I was getting sick of male company. It never seemed possible to talk about anything real, close to you, or tender... why did these brave males who kept grabbing their crotches and sticking their lips out have to put up so many(jokes) about women especially if, as it appeared, they devoted their lives to mastering them?'

Running through the book is his growing awareness of the desire to love women truly and to dress occasionally in their clothes - these factors seem to feed each other. The following describes his'coming out'as a transvestite to his lover:

> 'So I dressed and said..."You must think I'm a right old pervert," and she laughed and said it looked odd but she could see, in a way it suited me...she touched me a little. My own (feelings) were unambiguous: it was all shiveringly erotic.

Such references as there are in the book to gays tend to be negative but are only made in passing and it would be unfair to judge on the strength of them - especially as the book pointed out some of my own prejudices.
I would urge anyone who is attempting some process of coming to self-awareness to read the tale - it is an example of honesty and openness. Much of the latter half concerns the author's movement towards Buddhism and some sort of resolution of his contrasting aspects:

> 'I was Chenresi indeed, the male and female human god which, beneath the dust of centuries and the ripples of pools, all of us were.

I ordered a copy through Housman's Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1. It's not too easy to find but I do recommend it.
(John Richards)

BOOKS: a black woman & a paedophile anarchist

God ain't no white man

THE COLOR PURPLE
by ALICE WALKER
published by THE WOMEN'S PRESS
244 pages, £3.95

This marvellous book is full of insights into religion, the status of black women and relationships between women in general.

It is set in the harsh segregated world of the Deep South of the United States between the wars. Celie has been raped by the man she calls her father; her two children are taken away from her; her beloved sister Nettie has run away. She is sold into a marriage to Albert who beats her and instils into her a sense of worthlessness.

All alone Celie pours out her heart in letters to a white, domineering male God, receiving, needless to say, no reply.

But Celie's life is changed with the arrival of Shug Avery, singer and mystic. Strong, independant and bisexual, content with her blackness and her womanhood, Shug introduces Celie to the enjoyment of sexuality and to the love and support of other women. Shug reinterprets religion for Celie, recentring it within herself and in all of the beautiful things in the world around her. 'If God ever listened to poor colored women,' says Shug, 'the world would be a different place.'

The freshness of the ideas and the naivete of Celie are wonderfully conveyed in the atmospheric Southern black dialect.

I laughed, I cried and I was astounded. Don't miss this book.
(Simon Weivod)

male prostitution in pre-war Berlin

THE HUSTLER
by JOHN HENRY MACKAY
DISTRIBUTED by G M P
for ALYSON PUBLICATIONS (USA)
299 pages, £4.95

Novels dealing with gay themes and gay characters which were published before the Second World War are few and far between. The publication for the first time in English of a German gay novel written in the '20s is therefore something of an event. To learn that it is a defence of 'boy love' and that it was written by an anarchist makes it all the more remarkable.

John Henry Mackay was born in Scotland in 1864 but spent most of his life in Berlin. He achieved literary fame with his novels with the theme of anarchy. But he had a parallel career, under the pseudonym Sagitta, in a literary campaign for the recognition of homosexuality and in particular 'man/boy love'.

THE HUSTLER, published in 1926, was the major Sagitta project. It vividly evokes the world of gay male prostitutes in Berlin in the '20s. The streets, the bars, the private parties. The lousy hotels, the hunger, the deprivation, the drugs and the ever present danger of being arrested and removed to what must have been the models for the concentration camps. But the life has its high points and thus its attractions for an army of provincial boys coming to the capital to make good. Money, clothes and good times are on offer, if the boys are lucky enough to latch on to a rich client for more than just a few hours of drink and sex.

Gunther and Hermann arrive coincidentally in Berlin on the same day. Gunther to take to the streets and Hermann to take up a comfortable and respectable position with a publishing company. The novel charts the halting progress of their troubled relationship. Mackay himself was primarily attracted to boys fourteen to seventeen years old, and Hermann is his counterpart. Hermann is 22 and Gunther is 15. But Hermann, despite his established 'adult respectability', is naive and inexperienced, and Gunther, despite his underplayed youthful appearance, has lived a great deal in a short time. The theme of paedophilia thus sinks into the background. (Or perhaps this is a ploy on the part of Mackay, to show that there isn't really such a great difference between 'adults' and 'children'.)

What remains is the emotion universal to all relationships. The longing, the joy, the pain, the waiting, the disappointment, the love, the fulfillment are all skillfully evoked.

The account of the discovery of the relationship and the legal consequences is damning enough. But I was surprised to find how little anger, how little solidarity an anarchist could show. There is only resignation and a plea for understanding.

This English translation is a little uneven, containing as it does some awkward phraseology and contemporary American slang which sounds uncomfortable in the mouths of '20s Berliners. But the novel is enlightening, gripping and touching and a valuable addition to the body of gay literature.
(DAVID SMITH)

LIEBE STRASS

BOOKS:

street sex and alienation

ALMOST ONE by ALEX HIRST
published by G M P
99 pages, £2.95

ALMOST ONE is a jewel of a poetic novel with a multitude of overlapping images and meanings in its dense and demanding prose. Alex Hirst is one of the founders of SQUARE PEG - the lesbian and gay glossy arts magazine. In this semi-autobiographical first novel radical street-credible Alex moves in a contemporary London gay scene, living with his alter egos, Uncle Siegfried and Auntie Janet. Janet is a home lover, devoted to her house plants and to gossip. Siegfried philosphises etherially about marginalisation, remaining detached, feeling that nothing he does will change the situation. 'Should I despair?' he muses.

One of Alex's major concerns is coming to terms with the break up of his relationship with Andy. Janet dreams of Mr. Right. Siegfried is cynical and ultimately unable to cope with the contradictions of being attached to another independant individual. But Alex comes out of the shadow of his alter egos accepting the situation. 'Seeking the company of others is a way of trying to feel whole.' But we are irremediably alone. We are too fragmented to be able to present a cohesive enduring whole for another to love indefinitely. But the respect and enduring loyalty are worth the search.

Using old diaries - fragments of his past - Alex also relates his numerous casual sex encounters, in London and all over Europe. There are beautiful orgasms and wonderful touches of generosity, tenderness and trust between total strangers. Anal sex is the common denominator among men 'too irresponsible to deny ourselves the thrill of being bestial'. A.I.D.S. flits across the page in a dream-like sequence, but there is no polemic exhorting men to safe sex. This is a philosophical novel, an attempt to come to terms with 'loss, alienation, not belonging, fragmentation, schizophrenia, despair, lack of faith'.

Woven into the narrative, the reminiscences and the exchanges between Siegfried and Alex are some fascinating ideas about wanking, S&M, monogamy, role-playing, class, race, political involvement, the nature of memory and of course sex. It is a rich book. And because of its fragmentary form - cross-cutting from one scene to another - it is rewarding to dip into at random, trying - probably in vain - to make sense of the fragments, and at the same time achieving an inkling of how the novel itself came about. The images are haunting and the epigrams are incisive. This short but brilliant book deserves the attention of all gay and bisexual men. (David Smith)

Radical Feminism distorted

Women and the Family
in Thatcher's Britain
MORAL PANICS AND VICTORIAN VALUES
by Kate Marshall
published by JUNIUS
58 pages, £1.50

I always feel a bit schizophrenic when reading stuff from the 'hard left'. They seem to get a lot of things right and make many important points but I always want them to say more. In a propaganda pamphlet brevity necessitates missing bits out and sacrificing complexity for brief the omissions I can't help thinking that some of them are terribly convenient for Kate Marshall's arguement.

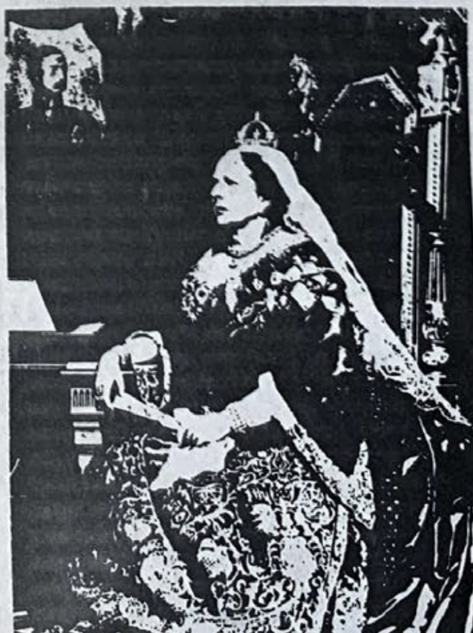
I agree with her that the family is very useful for the powers that be - it's there that conservative ideas about 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are taught. And the fact that women's domestic labour is unpaid is more than coincidental in a society based on the profit principle. But the family is also the way many people choose to live (though as Marshall says that choice is born out of necessity and against the background of a plethora of pro-family propaganda and legislation). But much more has to be said about why people consent to their own oppression.

What Marshall doesn't talk about is why our Trades Union Movement has spent so much energy excluding women from paid labour and arguing for the 'family wage' which by definition reinforces women's economic dependence on men.

Even more extraordinary is her description of the women's movement (which, she tells us, has done nothing about Gillick and Powell's attacks on women's right to a self-defined and safe sexuality). She argues that it's 'fragmented' and directionless and has therefore 'lost its radical momentum and virtually surrendered to the new morality'. By 'fragmentation' she means the realisation that sisterhood has to be built and that there can't be any simple unity between black and white women, lesbian and heterosexual women and so on because of the dynamics of power/powerlessness these lived divisions entail.

The women's movement is dealing with political alliances in which real mutuality has to mean people changing in line with their allies' demands to give up their oppressive assumptions and practices; to give up their power. The same style of politics is needed on the left, but Marshall calls this recognition of difference 'individualistic (and therefore against collective action and therefore bad) and divisive. She blames the Radical Feminists and implies that the idea that men oppress women undermines collective action with working class men and thus holds back the revolution. (The women of Greenham are singled out for particular criticism here because of their separatism, but the Radical Feminist case is seriously distorted by her in the process.) But in practice the Left has only taken sexual politics seriously because of powerful and stroppy women and gay men being awkward and critical. Without the women's movement the Left would be creating a very heterosexual, very male dominated revolution...

Neither does she recognise the scale of the defeat for left ideas Thatcherism represents, or emphasise the legitimate discontents people have with welfareism and Labourism. Marshall considers this approach 'defeatist'- it's actually realistic, and unless we start with the situation as it actually is we'll not be able to change it. And facile calls for "worker's unity" will do nothing for those of us who've been historically defeated within the Left because the patriarchal power relations of society have been reproduced within mainstream 'popular politics'. In the struggle in the relationship between capital and patriarchy, male labour has often collaborated with capital against women - and that sad (but very instructive) history is just one of Ms Marshall's significant omissions. (Step Holdsworth)



(Peter Kennard)

This issue...

Compiled and edited by David Smith, David Burkle and Ellen Weissbuch.

Contributions from Simon Weivod, Ellen Weissbuch, Tom Robinson, David Burkle, Sue Winter, John Richards, Pat White, David Smith, Step Holdsworth, Matt Milne and Andreas Reda.

Artwork by Ellen Weissbuch, David Smith, Peter Evans and John Barker, with apologies to Jo Nesbitt and Mad Magazine and Peter Kennard.

Photographs by David Burkle.

bi~monthly no.11

The Copy Date for BI-MONTHLY No.11 is Friday September 20th. All contributions are warmly welcomed.

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SIGMA conference

A one day conference has been organised by SIGMA, the support group for people with gay or bisexual partners.
Saturday 28th September
St. Pancras Church House,
Lancing Street,
London NW1
nearest station -Euston (Underground and B.R.)
10.30 - 5.30
Cost £5 including lunch.
The conference entitled UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER will include workshops on: Self-Image and Self-Responsibility;Alternative Lifestyles; Violence Within Relationships; Defence Mechanisms eg Agrophobia, Claustrophobi , Alcoholism, etc; What do we tell the children; and A.I.D.S. - The Facts (with a speaker from The Terrence Higgins Trust).
Further details and a booking form are available from The Conference Organiser, 30 Durnsford Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19.

L.B.G.

London Bisexual Group Programme

Mon. 5	Social
Mon. 12	'Men in Frocks' - Rachel
Mon. 19	Androgyny - Michael Brown
Mon. 26	Fi Craig from S&M Dykes (to be confirmed)
Mon. 2	Social and Fourth Birthday (see inside)
Mon. 9	Women's Celebration (see inside)
Mon. 16	Gay Community Radio - Phil Cox
Mon. 23	First steps into the Gay World - Matt
Sun. 29	Country Walk
Mon. 30	How to cope with the new pu ita ism - Carol Lee, author of 'The Ostrich Position'

All Monday meetings Take place at the THE FALLEN ANGEL, Graham Street, N1 - nearest tube, ANGEL - at 8.00pm.

For further information about the group or about anything else in BI-MONTHLY write to London Bisexual Group, BM BI, London WC1N 3XX or telephone David B. 340 5729 or David S. 359 4463

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Anti-Sexist Men

The MEN'S ANTI-SEXIST NEWSLETTER exists as a forum of exchange of news, ideas, thoughts, feelings and information for men who are challenging serism and for people who wish to find for men alternative roles to those society casts for them

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contact M.A.N.
60 Rhymney Street,
Cathays,
Cardiff.

Feminist Library and information centre

Feminist Library is working to provide information facilities on subjects of importance to women and the Women's Liberation Movement. Facilities include: a library, reading room and "cosy room", research index, information on women's studies courses and a newsletter – which appears every 2 months. You don't have to be a subscriber to use the library but membership entitles you to borrow books and to receive our newsletter. Our subscription is on a sliding scale between £1 and £8 depending on your income or what you can afford. Institutions and individuals on a high wage pay £12.

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